

Suicide Prevention Month

WARNING SIGNS, RISK FACTORS, & HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT IN A CRISIS

We can all help prevent suicide. Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. In fact, suicide is often the result of an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month — a time to raise awareness on this stigmatized, and often taboo, topic. In addition to shifting public perception, we use this month to spread hope and vital information to people affected by suicide. Our goal is ensuring that individuals, friends and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and to seek help.

This flier will have helpful information to know the warning signs and risk factors of suicide, how you can support in a crisis.



If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call 911 immediately.

If you are in crisis or are experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273 TALK (8255)

FAST FACTS

- 78% of all people who die by suicide are male.
- Although more women than men attempt suicide, men are nearly 4x more likely to die by suicide.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10–34 and the 10th leading cause of death overall in the U.S.
- The overall suicide rate in the U.S. has increased by 35% since 1999.
- 46% of people who die by suicide had a diagnosed mental health condition.
- While nearly half of individuals who die by suicide have a diagnosed mental health condition, research shows that 90% experienced symptoms.



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Warning Signs & Risk Factors

It can be frightening if someone you love talks about suicidal thoughts. It can be even more frightening if you find yourself thinking about dying or giving up on life. Not taking these kinds of thoughts seriously can have devastating outcomes.

Comments or thoughts about suicide — also known as suicidal ideation — can begin small like, “I wish I wasn’t here” or “Nothing matters.” But over time, they can become more explicit and dangerous.

WARNING SIGNS

- Increased alcohol and drug use
- Aggressive behavior
- Withdrawal from friends, family and community
- Dramatic mood swings
- Impulsive or reckless behavior

Suicidal behaviors are a psychiatric emergency. If you or a loved one starts to take any of these steps, seek immediate help from a health care provider or call 911:

- Collecting and saving pills or buying a weapon
- Giving away possessions
- Tying up loose ends, like organizing personal papers or paying off debts
- Saying goodbye to friends and family

If you are unsure, a licensed mental health professional can help assess.

RISK FACTORS

Research has found that **46%** of people who die by suicide had a known mental health condition. Several other things may put a person at risk of suicide, including:

- A family history of suicide
- Substance use. Drugs can create mental highs and lows that worsen suicidal thoughts.
- Intoxication. More than 1 in 3 people who die from suicide are under the influence of alcohol at the time of death.
- Access to firearms
- A serious or chronic medical illness
- Gender. Although more women than men attempt suicide, men are nearly 4x more likely to die by suicide.
- A history of trauma or abuse
- Prolonged stress
- A recent tragedy or loss



How to Support in a Crisis

When a suicide-related crisis occurs, friends and family are often caught off-guard, unprepared and unsure of what to do. The behaviors of a person experiencing a crisis can be unpredictable, changing dramatically without warning.

There are a few ways to approach a suicide-crisis:

- Talk openly and honestly. Don’t be afraid to ask questions like: “Do you have a plan for how you would kill yourself?”
- Remove means such as guns, knives or stockpiled pills
- Calmly ask simple and direct questions, like “Can I help you call your psychiatrist?”
- If there are multiple people around, have one person speak at a time
- Express support and concern
- Don’t argue, threaten or raise your voice
- Don’t debate whether suicide is right or wrong
- If you’re nervous, try not to fidget or pace
- Be patient

Like any other health emergency, it’s important to address a mental health crisis like suicide quickly and effectively.

SOURCES:

“Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.” NAMI, www.nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/suicide-prevention-awareness-month.